RRR
ROTHBARD-ROCKWELL REPORT

MARCH 1994 VOLUME V, NUMBER 3

American Spy in Washington

Scenes In a Marriage

by Joseph Sobran

Hillary Clinton, the gossips say, calls her husband names that nice girls didn't use to know. I have heard this from too many well-situated people to doubt it anymore, and I don't just mean alleged Secret Service men. One witness is a college friend of Hillary's who attended a dinner party with the Clintons and other classmates while Bill was governor of Arkansas. Hillary called Bill a rude synonym for one of his organs, which cast a pall over the party.

The Clintons have one of the most interesting and maybe fateful marriages in American political history. They began as Sixties flower children; she's a feminist (as he is, sort of). Yet the marriage has become a pure, old-fashioned business arrangement, because they need each other. Even now he is constantly unfaithful, and she accepts this. A divorce would have destroyed his chance to be president and her chance to be First Lady, a term she is said to loathe. Her "independent" stature as First Feminist, in other words, has depended entirely on her husband's success; she is the kind of feminist who fights patriarchy by keeping her father's surname. Not that she's let these paradoxes slow her down any.

This is an ambitious couple. But ambition aside, they have little in common. At Yale Bill was considered quite a catch, and friends marvelled that he chose as his mate the dowdy, brainy Hillary Rodham. They lived together unmarried for a while, until they decided their political goals required some show of respect for the mores of Arkansas, and they wed. Their goals now require them to stay formally married.

I have been piecing together a picture of the Clintons (my chief source being a forthcoming biography I have privileged access to). So far theirs has been a marriage of muffled explosions, as shared ambition contains one crisis after another.

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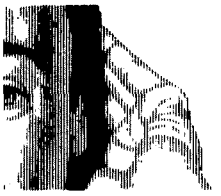

THE EAR

by Sarah Barton

Norman Podhoretz was under consideration for a high-level post in the Clinton administration, but he had to withdraw his name. He hadn't paid Social Security taxes on Bill Buckley.

* * * * *

In the attack on Nancy Kerrigan, asks a friend, do you think it was a lone nut, or do you subscribe to a conspiracy theory?

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(THE EAR cont. from pg. 1)

After a recent fundraising dinner, Hillary made a pass at the wife of a Democratic bigwig. The First Lesbo was turned down, I'm glad to report.

*****

Poor billionaire playboy David Koch! He simply gets No Respect! David, like many other biggies, keeps a permanent house at Aspen (Colorado, of course.) A couple of years ago, David decided to do something for Aspen: to give it an Olympic-size ice rink, usable for ice shows or hockey matches. David offered to pick up the tab: $4 million plus to build the rink, while making up any losses up to $50,000 per year for ten years.

In return for the over $9 million donation, David wanted nothing: not even his name on the rink. David's Koch Industries would build it, and then the rink would be turned over to a foundation made up of local citizens; all profits would go to local charities.

Did the grateful Aspenians offer David a medal? No way. Instead, arguing that David was trying to "buy his way into Aspen society," the City Council voted 3 to 2 to turn down the gift, and refused to hold a public referendum on the issue.

Left-libertarians have descended into stagnation or the snakepit.

*****

Les Aspin was forced out as Defense Secretary not for all the reasons you hear, but because he opposed clemency for convicted spy Jonathan Pollard. After he was fired, Aspin leaked a letter he had sent to Clinton showing that Pollard, far from being repentant, is still trying to pass on classified information from jail!

*****

One of the brightest and most scholarly of the Left-libertarians, two decades ago a young man of enormous promise, is now a heroin addict, kicked out of several apartments for non-payment of rent, mooching off his friends. This case is only one of many: the Best and the Brightest of the culturally Left-libertarians who were young at the start of the movement, have lived out the logic of their hedonism and nihilism and have descended into stagnation or the snakepit.

*****

One of the few welcome features of the new lefter *New York Times* is that editorial page-editor Howell Raines, a Southern boy of Clinton's generation, clearly detests Slick Willie. I don't think he knew Clinton personally; it's more like the great line from that wonderful British movie, *No Love for Johnny*. As Johnny [Peter Finch] leaves the Prime Minister's office, his parliamentary career shattered, the PM's secretary tells Johnny frostily: "It's not that I dislike you personally, Johnny; it's just that I don't like your type."

The result is the great, blistering editorial blast in the *Times* (Jan. 4) against the host of journalists who flocked to go to the Renaissance Weekend and listen to the President and his aides sound off, all under a pledge of secrecy to the public. The *Times* refused to allow any of its journalists to attend. Some of the prominent journalists who, in the words of the *Times*, "shamed themselves" in order to "touch the purple" and play into the Clintons' pretense of "imaginary victimhood" include: Wolf Blitzer and Peter Arnett of CNN, Andrea Mitchell of NBC, columnist Edwin M. Yoder, and *Newsweek's* Joe Klein, Michael Elliott, and Howard Fineman.

*****

Paul Weyrich's National Empowerment Television, five years and many millions of dollars in the planning, is the laughingstock of tv professionals. The cable channel, which puts

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second-level neocons on the air, is not only galactically boring, it's the amateur hour from a production standpoint, with missed cues, for example, the norm. "Empowerment," by the way, is a left-wing word and concept, invented by commie "community activist" Saul Alinsky. It means one neo-welfare scheme after another that taxes the middle-class for the underclass.

* * * * *

According to the *Wall Street Journal* (1/6/94), Vin Weber, ex-Congressman and House check-bouncer extraordinaire, is paid $150,000 for very part-time work at the neocon Empower America organization. He also received stock options worth $750,000 from EA's original sugardaddy, Ted Forstmann. I say original, because Jude Wanniski, Forstmann's control, has moved Ted to the Dole for President camp and out of Jack Kemp's. Neocon moralist Bill Bennett also got $150,000 for part-time "work," and $89,000 in 1992 from another foundation for simply having his name on the door. That doesn't include the sinecures he has at the Hudson Institute, the Smith Richardson Foundation, and a magazine. The annual total for Bennett is said to be $500,000. Nice non-work, if you can get it.

Does the prominent placement, let alone the publication, of the above article indicate that the Wall Street-neocon branch of the Establishment is dropping the politically flawed Kemp and Bennett as 1996 candidates and moving to Dole, the wholly owned subsidiary of ADM and other special interests? All the Ear can say is, Go Pat! And as a running mate or an alternative, how about the magnificent governor of Mississippi, Kirk Fordice?

* * * * *

Any of you who have been watching ABC's *World News Tonight* as a refuge from the left-biased "news" of the other networks, think again: Emily Rooney, daughter of sometimes Politically Incorrect Andy, has just been booted out as executive producer of WNT.

Emily's replacement: *Prime Time Live* executive producer Rick Kaplan, who is all P.C. Kaplan is a long-time buddy of Slick Willie, and a regular golfing companion. It was none other than Kaplan who saved Willie's bacon after the Gennifer Flowers revelation. He advised Clinton and Hillary to go on *60 Minutes* immediately, and *got them on.*

* * * * *

Running for the Republican Senatorial nomination in Michigan are political fixer Spence Abraham and talk-show hostess Ronna Romney. Ronna is an American beauty and Spence looks like a thug, but don't take that into account. Do take into account that Spence is a neocon and Ronna is a real conservative. For example, she opposed Nafta and the school-choice scam and wants to abolish the Department of Education. Spence, of course, is wrong on all three counts. Spence has the money on his side, but I predict that the people of Michigan aren't for sale. ■

How I Got Fired by
Bill Buckley

By Joseph Sobran

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***(MARRIAGE** cont. from pg. 1)*
Without that ambition they would certainly have divorced long ago.

Even at Georgetown, where he took a degree in international relations, Bill was running for president—of the United States. He made no secret of it. But Hillary has been the more focussed of the two, often seizing the rudder when Bill, a creature of impulse, had been steering straight for the rocks.

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Both Bill and Hillary were precocious kids, wowing their elders all the way. He is still doing it. There is something about him that reminds you of a student council boy playing mayor for a day, showing an impressive grasp of the expected mannerisms. Yet the mannerisms aren't really his; in the end, it's all a feat of mimicry. The point is that it is only a performance. After all, we are more impressed with a man who can mimic Hubert Humphrey than we ever were by Humphrey himself. Ever the bright boy, Bill Clinton doesn't seem to get wiser as he ages; he merely gets more precocious with age.

Hillary wowed people too, but she didn't need adulation the way Bill does. He thrives on it. He needs to be liked, admired, applauded. Hillary doesn't. She is more self-contained and self-assured. She has profited by impressing people, but it was never an end in itself for her, and she probably holds Bill in a certain contempt for needing the good opinion of others. She also has other reasons for holding him in contempt.

Bill Clinton is a genius at making good first impressions. He is a born politician. He can walk into a roomful of people and, after an hour, have them all convinced he is on their side. He is, as a friend of mine has put it, a human inkblot. A politician should not be, but seem.

This is an attribute of political leadership: to seem to stand for something, while allowing people to project their own hopes and dreams onto you. The debates over whether Bill is a great force for good or a great force for evil are really beside the point: he is a great force for Bill.

This is the sort of thing a long-suffering wife is in a good position to appreciate. We will probably never know everything about the Clintons' sex lives (though things being what they are, I wouldn't rule it out). But it seems safe to surmise that one chief reason for Bill's philandering is that Hillary is no longer impressed with him and doesn't give him the adulation he loves. His first impression on her was a long time ago. Their account of their first meeting, in fact, when she caught him staring at her in the Yale library and imperiously introduced herself (for once he was speechless), suggests that she was never taken in by him.

Hillary must be a stern critic to live with. She knows all her husband's tricks. And as Dr. Johnson observed, no man loves to live under the eye of perpetual disapprobation. With adoring bimbos, though, Bill can keep making wonderful first impressions over and over.

With adoring bimbos, Bill can keep making wonderful first impressions over and over.

Hillary likes power. She even likes to use it cruelly. She can be worse than rude to servants and bodyguards, abusing and humiliating them, even throwing things at them. She may have sized up Bill as her ticket to power very early, and decided along the way that the rest, grating as it must be for her, was worth putting up with for the sake of the grand prize.

It is curious that having left the provinces for Georgetown, Yale, and Oxford, and having studied international relations, Bill chose to go home to Arkansas. But it was a far-sighted move. It is much easier for a governor, even of a small state, than for a senator or congressman to be elected president. (As for a career in diplomacy, that was never in the cards for a man of either his temperament or his purpose.)

Everyone who watched Bill's state-of-the-union address agreed that it was a brilliant performance. But that's the way they described it: a performance. You can watch Richard Burton give a great Hamlet, but no matter how much you admire it, you still know it's really Burton and you know far too much about him to mistake him for Hamlet.

That's Bill Clinton. We're all getting to know him the way

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Hillary does. The great first impression was a long time ago.

But we may also be getting to know Hillary. What has already emerged about her Whitewater doings shows how very true it is that greedy people were breaking the law to make money during the Reagan years, just as the Clintons have always said. Her secret life in Arkansas is coming as a surprise even to her critics, who have tended to see her as a sort of fanatic and to credit her with a fanatic's moral integrity. But the key to her is ambition—a passion that has consistently subdued her supposed feminism. And judging by what has already transpired, the Whitewater revelations will reveal more about her than about Bill, possibly including the rumored affair between her and Vincent Foster. At any rate, the Clintons have gone to great lengths to keep the secrets secret.

Bill wasn't the only one who lied to the American people that famous night on *60 Minutes*. It was Hillary who, in effect, grabbed the mike and insisted that the marriage had been repaired. She expressed her contempt for standing by one's man, Tammy Wynette-style, even as she was standing by her nominal man; later she would vent her derision against cookie-baking wives, only to bake cookies for her Bill, like Lady Macbeth in a little apron, though she may still have been carrying on with Foster at the time.

In its way, the Clinton marriage is working. Which is not to say that anyone's enjoying it. ■

Who Killed Vince Foster?

by Murray N. Rothbard

You read it first in *RRR*: ["Fostergate," September 1993]. More and more, it looks as if the key to Whitewatergate and to much else that is rotten in the Clinton Administration centers on the mysterious slaying on July 20 of the White House counsel and long-time lover/and partner of Hillary Rodham, Vincent Foster, Jr. What do we know about Foster's death? Vince Foster left the White House at 1:00 P.M. on the 20th, in an apparently normal mood, after having spent most of the morning grappling, as a key figure and attorney with the tangled matters of Whitewatergate. Foster was not seen alive again; his body was discovered at about 6:00 P.M. in remote Fort Marcy Park on the Potomac. Foster had been shot in the head and killed. [Fort Marcy is more a lookout over the river off the highway, than a "park".] Time of death was estimated at between 4:00 and 5:00 P.M.

The investigation was quickly handed over to the Park Police, an outfit with expertise largely devoted to spearing litter in the park. The Park Police quickly pronounced the death a "suicide" and, even though the autopsy report has never been released to the public, the lapdog media obediently went along with this unproven hypothesis, and continued to refer to Foster's killing as a "suicide"; from then on, general speculation shifted to possible reasons or signs of Foster's supposed "depression" that had led him to this alleged act.

The dismissal of the Foster slaying as a "suicide" succeeded in burying the Foster Affair for several months. Then, in early December, the Foster death, along with Whitewatergate, came rapidly to the fore. It was discovered that chief White House counsel Bernard Nussbaum had spirited out of Foster's White House office, apparently under the noses of the bumbling Park Police, a crucial file on Foster's desk: a file (or files) dealing with the Whitewater Affair. Nussbaum then gave the file(s) into the safekeeping of the Clinton's personal lawyer, David Kendall. It was Nussbaum's curious taking of the Foster Whitewater file that sparked the agitation for the Clintons to come clean on Whitewatergate, and finally to the naming of the special prosecutor.

By mid-January, furthermore, the Nussbaum removal of the Whitewater file had skyrocketed in importance. For it was discovered that Nussbaum either separately, or together with at least two other people: Hillary's own chief of staff, Maggie Williams, and Bill Clinton's special assistant, Patsy Thomasson of the notorious Thomasson clan in Arkansas, removed the file from Foster's office on July 20, the day of Foster's death, and

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not, as the White House had previously claimed, two days later on July 22.

Since that disclosure, two fascinating discoveries have been made in the Mysterious Death of Vincent Foster. First, the *Wall Street Journal*, in a lengthy editorial of January 14 ["The Foster Test,"] indicated the truly sensational implications of this new chronology of the Foster Case. I urge our readers to get ahold of this WSJ editorial, and *read it carefully*, preferably more than once. Secondly, the intrepid *New York Post* sent investigative reporter Christopher Ruddy to inquire into the body and the slaying itself, with some sensational conclusions of his own [Christopher Ruddy, "Doubts Raised Over Foster's 'Suicide'", *Post*, January 27].

First, the WSJ chronology. Foster died between 4 and 5 o'clock. No one knows who found the body; apparently, the person who called the police was told of the body by its discoverer. The police and ambulances arrived on the spot at 6:00 P.M. or a bit after. It apparently took several hours for the police to identify the body and notify relevant people. Thomas "Mack" McLarty, White House Chief of Staff, and the boss of the White House in the absence of the Clintons (who were vacationing in Little Rock), only found about the Foster death at 9:15 P.M. McLarty informed Hillary of the death of their mutual buddy Foster in a phone call to Little Rock at 9:45 P.M. (Eastern time), and he told Slick Willie at 10 P.M., after Willie had finished a stint on the Larry King show.

In short, the White House did not know about the discovery of the body of Vince Foster until 9:15 P.M. But *in that case*, why oh why did Nussbaum, Williams, and Thomasson remove the file, which they presumably did during office hours, that is, long before 9:00 P.M. of July 20?? Why did they remove the file when, as far as they knew, Foster was not dead, and would return to his office the following morning, so that there would be no need to spirit the Whitewater file out of the office for safekeeping?

The *WSJ* concludes its account with these intriguing words: "Let us specify, lest compiling these facts gets us accused of the dread crime of innuendo, that we do not know what to make of all this. But we do think it's high time someone found out." Amen! Those of you who don't mind committing innuendo in your heart are invited to mull over the implications of this story. *Especially* when combined with the investigation by Christopher Ruddy of the *New York Post*.

Ruddy interviewed the Fairfax County paramedic who was the first rescue worker to see Foster's body; the first Park Policeman on the scene; various other witnesses to the body; and a medical examiner and former New York City homicide investigators and forensic experts with whom he discussed his findings. Here is what Christopher Ruddy found: Foster's body was discovered lying straight on a hill, "every extremity straight, as if it were ready for the coffin." The gun which shot him in the mouth was clutched in Foster's right hand.

There were many anomalies here. In the first place, the body, in such a case, should be consistent with the person's original position. In other words, Foster should have been lying down if he shot himself in the mouth. The bullet would then have been lodged in the ground behind him. And yet the *police were never able to find the bullet*. Where is the Foster Bullet? The police speculated the Foster bullet "must" have gone back into the woods. But in that case, he would not have been lying straight and rigidly on the ground.

Secondly, when a person shoots himself in the mouth, a reflex action usually hurls the gun up to 20 feet away from the body. It is unusual for a suicide to remain, after death, with the gun gripped tightly in his hand. Vernon Geberth, a former New York detective who has written a nationally recognized homicide-investigation textbook, says that generally "after the firing the gun is away from the person," although he acknowledged that in "rare" cases the suicide can keep gripping the gun.

Thirdly, the murder weapon was a .38 caliber Colt revolver. A .38 Colt firing into the head almost always results in a "tremendous amount of blood, blood all over the place,it would be a mess... [A] .38

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makes a powerful explosion. There's a backwash of blood and tissue." *And yet*: everything was remarkably clean; there was little blood anywhere. There were no pools of blood around the body, no mess, no splattering of blood on face or shirt, no blood on the gun.

No blood anywhere; no bullet; no mess; body lying rigid and straight with gun clutched in hand; what does all this imply? These facts all strongly imply that Vincent Foster, Jr., was shot and killed by person or persons unknown, his body transported to Fort Marcy Park, laid straight on the ground, the gun placed into his hand and his fingers wrapped around the gun. Clearly, there would be no blood and no bullet if the murder had taken place elsewhere.

Was there time for all this? You bet. Vincent Foster was last seen leaving the White House at 1 P.M., July 20. He was killed, apparently, between 4 and 5 P.M. and his body reached by police and rescue workers just after 6 P.M. There was plenty of time unaccounted for, to commit the deed and transport the body. Furthermore, there is no evidence that Vince Foster owned the fatal 1913 Colt .38 revolver that did the foul deed. No member of the Foster family has been able to identify the gun as his. So: not only no bullet and no blood, but no Foster gun.

If Vince Foster was murdered and his body transported to the park, where someone, no one knows who, reported a body to a second person who called the police; if this is what happened, does anyone in his right mind think the killer was a "lone nut"? Why would a lone nut take the trouble to move the body and make it look like suicide? What would be the lone nut's motive? A lone nut murderer of Vince Foster is about as likely as the notion that the guy who banged Nancy Kerrigan on the leg was a lone nut. So: if the murder of Vince Foster was, say, a contract hit, in light of the *WSJ* chronology, does anyone have an idea of *who* might have taken out the contract?

Enough! We need an independent, tough, no-holds-barred Congressional investigation, armed with subpoena power, financed by as much as it may take, which will fearlessly go into every nook and cranny, and investigate every likely suspect, without fear or favor, and *as high up as necessary*. And following *RRR's* long-time exhortation to "Exhume! Exhume!" the body of every mysterious death suffered by anyone occupying or high up in the White House, the body of Vincent Foster should be exhumed and analyzed by independent and fearless experts. And *this time*, let's not get deflected by any phony, coverup, "Rehnquist" Commission. This time, let's not get distracted by the moral equivalent of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, or by the Russian Embassy, or Castro, or Sam Giancana or Jimmy Hoffa. This time, let's dare to think the unthinkable. ■

And *this time*, let's not get deflected by any phony, coverup, "Rehnquist" Commission.

More On Who Killed Vince Foster?

by M.N.R.

The stunning article of Christopher Ruddy in the *New York Post* (Jan. 27) casting strong doubt on Vince Foster's "suicide" brought forth a storm of calls upon the White House for comment. Curiously, the White House referred all inquiries to well-know Pittsburgh forensic pathologist, Dr. Cyril Wecht, who maintained that a suicide who shoots himself in the mouth is often found with his hand clutched around the weapon.

The odd part about the Clinton Administration using Dr. Wecht as their Court Pathologist on this issue, is that Wecht is well-known to Kennedy

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Assassination Revisionists as an intrepid champion of the idea that Jack Kennedy was *not* killed by a "single bullet" fired by Lee Harvey Oswald. It was Dr. Wecht, too, who first called attention to the fact that Kennedy's brain is missing in the federal archives. So, how come that an intrepid revisionist in the Kennedy matter leaps up to become a Clintonian apologist on the Foster case, *and does so without having bothered to see the autopsy report*, which has been sealed from view? Could it possibly have anything to do with the fact that most [though not all] Kennedy Assassination Revisionists have been leftists, whose conspiracy analyses have focussed generally on the CIA, and not on leftist forces? Whereas the Clinton Administration is beloved by the Left? Dr. Wecht, it might be added, was once a Democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate.

In an important follow-up to his original article, Christopher Ruddy ["More Questions About Foster's 'Suicide'", *New York Post*, Jan. 31] mentions the Wecht comment, and rebuts it by pointing out that the park police had claimed that Foster had fired the gun with his thumb. which is apparently quite common for a suicide shot. But various homicide experts pointed out to Ruddy that it is highly unusual for a gun fired by a suicide into his mouth to wind up clutched in his hand. Thus, Dr. Lester Adelson, highly respected forensic pathologist and a medical examiner for the city of Cleveland, pointed out the absurdity of thinking that a person could shoot himself in the mouth, firing it with his thumb, "and then change his grip and move the weapon to his side." Said Adelson, "Nature is honest. Use common sense. I think that if a person shot himself in the mouth with a .38, they are not going to be able to carry out purposeful acts."

It is highly unusual for a gun fired by a suicide into his mouth to wind up clutched in his hand.

In addition to effectively rebutting the Clinton-to-Wecht ploy, Christopher Ruddy has carried his inquiries to a further stage: Who reported the Foster body? It turns out that at about 6 P.M. of that fateful July 20, park worker Francis Swan was in the parking lot of a maintenance facility about two miles away from Fort Marcy Park. Swan was sitting in his truck with a co-worker "having a beer after work." At that point, a white utility van, driven by a heavy-set white man in his mid-40s, with graying hair and dressed in work clothes, pulled up to the truck. Speaking through the van window, the heavy-set driver told Swan: "There's a dead body by the cannon up in Fort Marcy. Will you call the Park Police?" At which point, the man drove off. Swan then went to the pay phone in the parking lot and called 911, setting off the chain of events that brought the police and paramedics to the site where Foster was found.

But several critical questions rush to the fore; (1) Who was this driver? (2) Why didn't he make the call himself? (3) It turns out that Foster's body was not visible from the main trail that runs through Fort Marcy Park. But this means that the van driver would have to have been out of his van and off the main trail to spot the Foster body. What was he doing in Fort Marcy Park? It should come as no surprise that the U.S. Park Police have been unable to locate the driver. Clearly, the driver, if ever found, might be able to shed light on key questions, in addition to who he was and what was he doing in the park, such as: Did he see Foster alive? Did he hear the fatal shot? It would also be interesting to know if said driver has any political connections.

Another mystery about the 911 call about Foster's body: George Gonzalez, the Fairfax County paramedic who was the first rescue worker to examine Foster's body, distinctly remembers a 911 call about Foster made by an "unidentified

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woman." The Fairfax County 911 dispatch unit says that Swan's call about the Foster body was the only one on record, but it admitted that they "only keep [a record of] the first call that comes in." Unfortunately, all tapes of 911 calls for that night were destroyed, as per usual practice, 30 days after the night in question.

Surely, all the investigative resources of the government should concentrate on finding the unidentified driver, as well as the mysterious woman.

Fostergate grows curiouser and curiouser. When will the veil over Fosters demise be ripped off? ■

Within a Month! The Bringing Down of Bobby Ray Inman

by M.N.R.

On December 16, President Clinton named retired Admiral Bobby Ray Inman to fill the post of Secretary of Defense. To say that the nominee was universally hailed would be a masterpiece of understatement. To pundits, media people, politicians, and leading "well-informed sources" inside the Beltway, Bobby Ray Inman could walk on water: He was the perfect choice to bring order and prestige to Clinton's troubled and screwed-up foreign and military policies. Bobby Ray was brilliant, sober, knowledgeable, the Insiders' Insider, Mr. Intelligence. When Bobby Ray retired from many years of public service in Washington in the early 1980s, and returned to Texas, the reporters at Austin put on an affectionate show in his behalf, singing, to the tune of "Jesus Christ, Superstar,": "Bobby Ray, Superstar/Are you the messiah that they say you are?" Clearly, Washington greeted his return on December 16 with the fervent answer, Yes!

Moreover, Inman had come highly recommended. The main person pushing for his appointment within the Administration was Clinton's First Friend in the Trilateralist Establishment, Rhodes Scholar and Oxford roomie Strobe Talbott, now Deputy Secretary of State, and Secretary of State-in-waiting. Inman's coronation seemed secure.

And yet, in just three weeks from that date, on January 6, Bobby Ray Inman, reeling from bitter attacks by *New York Times* columnist Bill Safire, attacks seconded by a couple of other media people, decided to withdraw from the fray. He waited a couple of weeks to tell the President, until Clinton's mother's funeral and his Russian trip were out of the way, and then Inman went out in a blaze of fury, in a remarkable televised press conference on January 18, less than a week before his Senate confirmation hearings were slated to begin.

The almost monolithic response by the media was the most instructive and revealing aspect of the Inman Affair. Almost exclusively, the media focussed on speculations on the supposedly odd psychological state of mind of Admiral Inman. How could Inman retreat just because Bill Safire and a couple of other columnists were criticizing him? How could he possibly conjure up a "conspiracy" between Safire and Senator Dole to attack him and besmirch his character? Inman talked about "sources" but he couldn't *prove* his charges, could he? Inman was denounced as remarkably "thin-skinned," his behavior in charging conspiracy treated as "weird" and "bizarre," and the general reaction echoed that of Senator Dole: that someone harboring "fantasies" of this sort was not really equipped to be the captain at the helm of America's defenses. In the psychobabble beloved by the media, it was noted (which Inman had never denied) that Inman was always reluctant about taking the job, and that therefore these fantasies and this thin skin were really excuses for Inman's not taking the position.

Amidst all the stress on Bobby Ray's supposedly fragile psyche, it was overlooked that very little space was devoted to the content of the charges that Safire and the others were levelling against Bobby Ray; and virtually *no* space to Bobby Ray's explanation of the hostility that Safire and the others had long harbored against him, and which led to their anti-Inman campaign.

The media accounts all stress that no Senators were opposing the Inman nomination; but the Senate staffers were pre-

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paring detailed and thorough "scrutiny" of Inman's affairs. The media all imply that Inman was "paranoid" and engaging in fantasies. But if Bobby Ray, formerly Deputy Director of the CIA and head of the National Security Agency, is not equipped to distinguish between "paranoia" and genuine conspiracies, who is? Surely, "Mr. Intelligence" is better equipped for this task than reporters for the *New York Times* or the *Wall Street Journal*.

So let's stop the juvenile psychoanalyzing of Bobby Ray and cut to the content. The charges about to surface against Inman in the hearings included possible financial and even criminal peccadilloes in the private sector, centering around two companies. One was Inman's role as a member of the board of International Signal and Control, a firm found by a federal district judge to be a criminal enterprise engaged in illegal arms dealing, money laundering, and business fraud on a massive scale. The other firm was Tracor, Inc., an Austin, Texas military contractor of which Bobby Ray was chief executive, and which sank into insolvency, but not before Inman received nearly $1 million in executive compensation. Then, of course, there was Inman's Nannygate, in which he hastily paid $6,000 in back Social Security taxes for an aged part-time housekeeper only *after* he had been nominated for Secretary of Defense.

Furthermore, Bill Safire was not above ridiculing Inman's name in his widely influential column. Brushing aside the knowledge that a name like "Bobby Ray" is common in Texas and throughout the South, Safire ridiculed such a name for a grown man.

There was also a particularly ugly side to the media campaign against Inman. One of the points dredged up against Inman was that, while a high official in intelligence in 1980, he had acted to keep a gay in the National Security Agency from being fired from his post. Part of the anti-Inman tactic was a vicious whispering campaign to the effect that Inman himself, though married, is a secret gay. Before he dropped out, Inman told friends that no less than four reporters had called him up to ask him if he is gay.

Hey, not so fast, fella! You forgot to check with us at *RRR*. Why *not* believe it?

Is it any wonder that Inman, who had left Washington because he hated the chronic back-stabbing, decided to Hell with it, and that, in fury, he decided to strike back at his tormentors instead of giving the usual bromides about "personal reasons" for withdrawal and making a quick exit from the scene?

It is fascinating, by the way, that so many of the Liberal media, always quick to attack "homophobia" and to proclaim that they are pro-gayer than thou, should not be above vicious gay-bashing against political figures they dislike. (The last time they pulled this stunt was against V. Zhirinovsky, after he won the Russian election, but of course the U.S. media are still a bit less powerful in Moscow than they are in Washington, D.C.)

Saluting "The Withdrawal of Admiral Inman," the *New York Times* (Jan. 20) crowed that "there was no politician or commentator so contrarian as to believe his [Inman's] improbable parting charge of a conspiracy" between Senator Dole and William Safire. Hey, not so fast, fella! You forgot to check with us at *RRR*. Why *not* believe it? Stranger things have happened in Washington, and in recent weeks many neocons (e.g. at the *Wall St. Journal*) have been making noises about shifting their allegiance for 1996 from Jack Kemp to none other than Senator Dole, who of course is eagerly seeking media support. And Bill Safire is a powerful leader of the neocon forces. And, as we said above, who in the U.S. is in a position to know more about political conspiracies than Admiral Inman?

This is not to say that

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Inman's conspiracy charge is proven. What we need to find out the truth is an all out, tough Congressional investigation, armed with subpoena power, to get to the bottom of the entire mess. None of the principals or their henchmen should be spared. Big Media has become an excessively powerful and malignant force in American political life; and it is high time that its machinations are exposed to public view.

The most fascinating, but oddly enough the least reported, aspect of the Inman Affair is the source of the implacable hostility that Safire and his allies have borne for many years toward Bobby Ray Inman. Inman revealed the source in his famous Jan. 18 press conference, but he failed to bring out the background. The source: In early 1981, Israel suddenly bombed Iraq's nuclear reactor. Puzzled, Inman, then deputy head of the CIA, realized that Israel could only have known where the nuclear reactor was located by having gotten access to U.S. satellite photographs. But Israel's access was *supposed* to be limited to photographs of direct threats to Israel, which would not include Baghdad. On looking into the matter, furthermore, Inman found that Israel was habitually obtaining unwarranted access to photographs of regions even farther removed, including Libya and Pakistan. In the absence of Reagan's head of the CIA, Bill Casey, Inman ordered Israel's access to U.S. satellite photographs limited to 250 miles of its border. When Casey returned from a South Pacific trip, his favorite journalist and former campaign manager, Bill Safire, urged Casey to reverse the decision, a pressure that coincided with complaints from Israeli Defense Minister General Ariel Sharon, who had rushed to Washington to try to change the new policy.

Secretary of Defense Cap Weinberger, however, held firm, supported Inman, and overruled Casey, and from then on Safire pursued a vendetta against Bobby Ray Inman.

This incident must be understood against its structural background: the CIA had long consisted of two clashing factions: the hard-line hawks, fanatical Cold Warriors, pro-Zionists and close to Israel's spy agency Mossad; and the moderates, close to the Establishment and the Rockefeller World Empire. The hard-liners and Mossadniks were big in the Operations department, and included Ops chief James Jesus Angleton, and Bill Buckley's CIA mentor and buddy E. Howard Hunt; they were headed by William J. Casey. The moderates were strong in the Intelligence department, and included William Colby and Admiral Inman.

Cut to the present, and the conspiracy charge by Inman against Safire & Co. begins to make sense. For one point rarely mentioned in the media accounts is that Inman, in his press conference, did not only mention Safire and Senator Dole. He also mentioned, as part of the campaign against him, not only the editors of the *New York Times*, but three other media powers: *New York Times* columnist Anthony Lewis, *Boston Globe* columnist Ellen Goodman, and *Washington Post* cartoonist Herblock (Herbert Block). On the face of it, a concerted campaign by these people against Inman would seem implausible; after all, Safire is a neocon, whereas the *New York Times*, Tony Lewis, Ellen Goodman, and Herblock are all notorious left-liberals. What could they all possibly have in common?

The answer is that they all have one important thing in common, one tie that binds. They are all ardent Zionists, and the source of the hostility to Inman at not being sufficiently pro-Israel now makes sense in underpinning the vendetta when Inman reluctantly agreed to Clinton's and Talbott's importuning to return in triumph to Washington.

In a fuller perspective, then, Admiral Bobby Ray Inman does not seem to be a paranoid nut after all. On the contrary, no one can blame him for saving himself and fleeing back to the warmer milieu of Austin, Texas. It is no wonder that Bobby Ray feels more "comfortable" in Austin than in Washington, to use one of his favorite words. But it would have been far healthier for America, and for Americans' knowledge of the political forces at work in this country, if Bobby Ray had stood fast, and had forced a knock-down drag-out confrontation, in the course of which much of the

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truth might have come to the surface. As it is, it is inevitable that Safire & Company will be accorded near-legendary political influence from now on. In a town that worships Power, Bill Safire has now virtually attained the status of a Rajah. ■

First Fruits of Nafta: The Mexican Revolution

by M.N.R.

They told us that one of the main reasons we *had* to pass NAFTA was to save the political bacon of the Salinas regime in Mexico, that beacon light of free markets and democracy in Latin America. Well, folks, welcome to the post-NAFTA world, the direct consequence of NAFTA: the shining new, Mexican peasant revolution!

Brilliantly coordinated and timed to begin on January 1, the day that NAFTA took effect, the revolution of Mexican Indians was timed deliberately in protest against NAFTA. While centering in the southern state of Chiapas, revolutionary activity, including the blowing up of electrical towers, has occurred in distant parts of Mexico. It is clear from the proclamation of the rebellion by Commandante Marcos, leader of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, (ZALN), that the passage of NAFTA was, for the Zapatistas, the last straw that precipitated the rebellion.

From news reports, it is clear that while the Zapatistas call themselves "socialists," the rebels are far less ideological than other rebel or guerrilla movements in Latin America. Like many anti-NAFTA groups in the U.S., they see that NAFTA will harm the Mexican economy, but they don't see exactly how. The true story is that NAFTA will harm the Mexican economy far more than it will hurt Americans; for the imposition of "side agreement" environmental, labor relations, and minimum wage requirement will have tremendous cost-raising, and unemployment-creating effects in Mexico, where export and investments will be rendered far less competitive in the world market.

According to a recently issued report of the Mexican government, the ZALN has been active for a couple of years, aiding land seizures by the peasantry, and ambushing army and security forces; but then why was the Mexican government, as well as the U.S. media, caught in so stunning a surprise? Why didn't the government disclose, or do anything about, the burgeoning movement of the armed Indian peasantry? Mexican political analyst, Federico Reyes Heroles, put his finger on the answer(*New York Times*, Jan. 9): "I think they [the Mexican government] tried to keep all of this under wraps in order to get the Free Trade Agreement through. But the concrete result is that they let this go on for at least two years without taking action and they allowed the guerrillas to grow and grow."

The grievances of the Mexican Indians are pointed and specific, and are not simply vague mouthings about "capitalism." They include tyrannical officials imposed upon them by the central Mexican government, and the grabbing of peasant land in order to turn it over to ranchers or, still worse, to the federal government's oil monopoly. In short, the seizure of the "backward" use of their own land by the peasantry, in behalf of other, more "modern" uses to be practiced by the robbers. Like peasants everywhere in the Third World, the Mexican Indians are protesting not against "poverty," but against the confiscation of the land that they properly consider their own. Unfortunately, no one tells these peasants that their yearnings are those of genuine, private-property-based, free-market capitalism. Instead, all they know about capitalism or the market are the mouthings of their hated enemies, the Mexican state-capitalist government (of Salinas or others), as well as their pro-NAFTA "free market" satellites in the U.S.

The bursting forth of the new Mexican Revolution raises a fascinating question about the intrepid U.S. media. The *New York Times* and other papers promptly sent journalists to San Cristobal de las Casas, the major town in Chiapas captured by the rebels, and later retaken. But the question is: was this really

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an admirably rapid response, or was the reaction so quick because the media had already been informed of an imminent rebellion? In short, were the U.S. media complicit in the Salinas coverup of the imminent Mexican Revolution?

The Salinas clique, in the meanwhile, is reacting in ways typical of regimes that lack genuine popular support. Thus it claims that the rebellion is not *really* supported by the Indian peasantry, but instead consists merely of a handful of "outside agitators" from Nicaragua or Guatemala, who are coercing the peasantry into going along with the guerrillas. But this is a lot of nonsense, as anyone who knows anything about guerrilla movements will testify. Guerrilla movements can only take root and flourish if they are supported, and supported with enthusiasm, by the bulk of the peasantry in their areas. If they are not, the peasants will simply reveal their location to the more numerous and more heavily armed authorities, and that will be that.

Mao Tse-tung and Che Guevara always stressed the need for the rebel guerrillas to have popular support, and for that reason the peasant people were to be the "sea" in which the guerrillas "swim." Ironically enough, it was the violation of his own principles that brought Che to a swift and bad end: parachuting with his armed troop into a remote rural area of Colombia, he tried to rouse the Colombian Indian peasantry against their oppressors in Bogota. But, for one thing, Che and his men spoke Spanish, the hated tongue of the conqueror, and not the Indian language of the area; and so the peasantry regarded them as a simple bandits, and turned their location into the authorities. End of Che.

The Salinas regime is also handling the rebellion by a despicable method typical of counter-guerrilla action when the government lacks the support of the people: the imposition of what has been called a "White [in contrast to a Red] terror." Thus, the government has been executing rebel prisoners, and torching and killing civilian peasants in the region, including women and babies —thereby belying its claim that the peasantry is being coerced by an outside handful of guerrillas.

The government has been executing rebel prisoners, and torching and killing civilian peasants, including women and babies.

It's possible, of course, that the White Terror may work, but the revolutionary process appears to be too far advanced for that. More likely, the tactics will horrify the Mexicans and drive far more of them into the Zapatista camp, thus intensifying the problem. Already, Commandante Marcos and the ZALN have been targeting government oil and electrical installations in urban as well as rural areas.

It looks like a long shot now, but who knows? It might be that the Zapatista Army of National Liberation will be marching in triumph down the streets of Mexico City before the Buchanan Brigades are able to take back Washington, D.C. In any case, the Mayan Indians of southern Mexico are showing a lot more spunk than their ethnic remote cousins in the northern part of that country. Overall, may we say that the Zapatistas form a militant wing of the Mexican division of the North American anti-NAFTA populist front? ■

Vatican-Israel Rapprochement

by M.N.R.

On December 30, the Vatican ended its long-standing policy, and officially recognized the State of Israel, and the two states exchanged mutual recognition. Contrary to some press accounts, the Vatican's refusal to recognize was not based on Israeli treatment of Palestinians, but quite properly on Catholic religious con-

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cerns: in particular the Israelization of the Holy City of Jerusalem, which was originally not supposed to be subject to the control of any one religious faith.

It is notable that the Vatican caved in on its long-standing principled stance without one smidgen of concession from the State of Israel. In New York, Israeli Consul General Colette Avital praised New York Catholic John Cardinal O'Connor for playing a "fundamental role...behind the scenes" in bringing about the Vatican-Israel accord.

Several Israeli leaders, however, angrily denounced the agreement. In particular, Israel's most influential newspaper *Ha'aretz* bitterly attacked the accord. (It should be noted that *Ha'aretz*, far from being an "extremist" organ, is often considered the "*New York Times*" of Israel.) *Ha'aretz* wrote that the Catholic Church had "persecuted the Jews in the Middle Ages, and the pages of its history are stained with Jewish blood....[It] should not be forgiven for this."

Similarly, the Israeli newspaper with the largest circulation, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, commented that "The Catholic Church is one of the most conservative, oppressive and corrupt organizations in all human history... The reconciliation can be done only if the Catholic Church and the one who heads it fall on their knees and ask for forgiveness from the souls of millions of tortured who went to Heaven in black smoke, under the blessing of the Holy See."

In contrast to this hard-core anti-forgiveness stance, as far as I know not a single Catholic leader or periodical anywhere has stood up to defend what had been strict Vatican principle before 1993. Moreover, while in the agreement, the Catholic Church pledges to combat "anti-Semitism," there is not even a hint of a sign that Israel would take any action whatever in combatting rampant anti-Catholicism in its own bailiwick.

What did they use to say about the perilous consequences of "appeasement"?

Why this outrageous double standard? What did they used to say about the perilous consequences of "appeasement"? ■

Arts and Movies

by Mr. First Nighter

Those Awards

Writing in late January, it is already all too clear that the fix is in, even more than usual, on the Academy Awards. The earlier awards, of the New York Film Critics Circle, the Golden Globes of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, and other lesser lights, have presaged the main event.

The Oscars have increasingly taken on the dimensions of a racket. Since the eligible movies are those that emerge at any point during the calendar year, and since the producers fully understand the minuscule attention span of the typical Academy dimwit, all the Big Pictures, calculated to appeal to said dimwit, are held back until December 30 or 31. As a result, the experts were confidently predicting awards in late December to movies that *no one had yet seen*. The major studies have always had special previews for Academy members [i.e. Oscar voters] for the pictures they are hyping for the awards; now, that has been supplemented by videocassettes expressed to the homes of each voter.

To the average Academy moron, the only movie deserving an award is that reeking with pretension: slow, ponderous, boring and *therefore* inevitably pregnant with what the "Saturday Night Live" comic calls "Deep Thoughts." In recent decades, as Hollywood culture has gone sharply Leftward, this has also meant a blend of leftish nihilism and what used to be called "social significance." 1993 was a year even more nightmarish for these attributes than usual. As far as Big Movies go, it was a year to head for the storm cellar.

If the Pretentious Pictures come out in late December, the

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early summer is the time for movies that people may actually *enjoy*: a time for the fun movie. Last summer, even I was lulled into a false sense of security, for the summer movies, in recent years strictly for the teen-age monster-loving crowd, were in 1993 a relatively superior lot. *The Fugitive*, my own personal choice for Best Movie of the Year, was magnificent; in pace, timing, and tight editing a throwback to the great suspense and adventure movies of the past. It's a taut thriller from beginning to end, with not a moment wasted. It's one of the best films in many years. Other movies of last summer were not as superior, but still noteworthy, especially Clint Eastwood's *In the Line of Fire*, about a veteran Secret Service agent blocking the villainous John Malkovich from assassinating the President. Also excellent was *Search for Bobby Fischer*, an unusual film that catches the spirit of the chess world and centers on a remarkable child actor himself a chess prodigy. Further down the list but still worth seeing as what used to be called "good hot weather fare": *Jurassic Park*, a fun movie if not taken seriously. [Can anyone imagine that billionaire Richard Attenborough and his team of crack scientists and computer mavens would construct a dinosaur park (a) in a hurricane belt, and (b) without a protective backup if the electrified fence went out?] Also *Sleepless in Seattle*, which however was a pathetically far cry from the romantic comedies of the 1930s and 40s it imitates. It's one thing to meet by accident, lose your love, and then find her again; it's quite another, however, to fall in love very intensely *without ever having met*. The movie also lacks the crackling wit that is usually the hallmark of director Nora Ephron.

The fix is in, and the winners will be the most repellent lot of Politically Correct cinema in many a moon.

But don't worry: none of these movies will come anywhere near the Oscar bullseye. (Except for the marvelous actor, Tommy Lee Jones, who will get the Best Supporting Actor prize for *The Fugitive* when he really deserves *Best Actor*.) For, as we said, the fix is in, and the winners will be the most repellent lot of Politically Correct cinema in many a moon: Best Picture: *Schindler's List*; Best Actor: Tom Hanks in *Philadelphia*; Best Actress: Holly Hunter, in *The Piano*. Best Supporting Actress will probably be Winona Ryder, in the *Age of Innocence*, a movie which is indeed pretentious but not repellent, although La Ryder scarcely deserves the honor. The only suspense left in the Oscars is whether the sainted Stephen Spielberg will get the Best Director spot for *Schindler's List*. [The problem is that while the entire Academy votes for the other spots, only directors vote for *Best Director*, and the veteran schlockmeister Spielberg is less than popular with his peers.] The only other suspense at this writing is who will get the coveted spot as comic MC to keep the interminable award ceremony going, now that Billy Crystal has withdrawn after several years in the post.

Since I am not a professional movie critic I am not obliged to see what I know in advance I will dislike, so I haven't seen either *Schindler's List* or *Philadelphia*. *Schindler's List* is a movie which has become not only Politically Incorrect but even taboo to be less than worshipful about, since it purports to enable us, for the umpteenth time, to Learn About The Holocaust (the latter term always capitalized to emphasize its solemnity and to assert its Absolute Uniqueness in the grisly world historical record of mass murder).

And yet anyone who tries to Learn About History by going to a Hollywood movie deserves to have his head examined. Did we really learn the true story of Moses by watching Charlton Heston, or by seeing the great Yul Brynner, as Pharaoh, say finally, in his Siberian accent, after being visited by the plagues, "Go, Moses, take your people and go?" Or, did we learn the facts about the monster Cromwell

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by seeing Richard Harris in the hagiographical movie of the same name? And yet, we are supposed to sit respectfully and in awe, *as if we were in church*, for over three hours, to watch what is admittedly a fictionalized version of a novel, and to act as if this is new and shattering History we are imbibing! While Thomas Keneally's novel was fiction loosely based on fact, the Spielberg movie is far more loosely grounded fiction based on the shaky foundation of a novel: fiction-squared, so to speak. Also, the idea that a German concentration camp commandant would shoot prisoners at random with a rifle, just for the sport, goes against everything we know about German military discipline or about the way any large concentration camp has to be run. These dramatic scenes in the movie, of course, have no grounding in historical fact whatever.

Apart from that, watching a concentration camp for three hours is not exactly my idea of a fun evening at the theater; anyone who enjoys watching concentration camps is better advised to watch the French film *Shoah*, which is a full nine-and-a-half hours long, to be topped off by Hans-Jurgen Syberberg's absurdist seven-hour German film, *Our Hitler*. Then, if your appetite for watching Nazis hasn't yet been slaked, you can segue to the fifteen-and-a-half hour German film *Heimat*. And then, maybe, as they say these days, we "can put it all behind us," and get on to other topics. Or is that too much to ask?

And yet, the only criticism of the film has come from reviewers who claim that the movie is not pro-Jewish or anti-Gentile *enough*, since the protagonist Oskar Schindler, a contractor who saved Jews in his employ, was a Gentile. At this point it is difficult to see how Schindler could have been made to be Jewish, since if he were he would undoubtedly have been an inmate of the camp rather than a contractor.

The idea that watching *Schindler's List* should be treated as a religious experience led to an amusing culture clash in Oakland, California (*L.A. Times*, January 21). In celebration of Martin Luther King Day, a group of black high school students in Oakland were shepherded to see a showing of the movie, presumably to Uplift them from their usual movie fare. The result: disaster. The kids acted the way they usually do in a movie: making noise, laughing and giggling in the wrong parts, generally not treating the picture with the reverence that the more elderly folk there thought it deserved.

As a result, as the theater owner puts it, "About 30 outraged patrons poured into the lobby, complaining about the derisive laughter and offensive comments during the atrocities—when Jews were murdered on screen. I've never seen such furious, hurt customers. Some were Holocaust survivors and one woman was sobbing." The owner thereupon stopped the movie, and ordered all the high school students ejected.

The four teacher-chaperons who had herded the kids there were themselves outraged at the ejection. One, Dean of Students Tanya Dennis, claimed that the students were "evicted unfairly, with no warning," and she hinted that the cause was racism: "Some elderly white people were wondering what black kids were doing at the movie. Our kids have seen more violence and suffered more oppression than these people."

Perhaps the most interesting defense of the young lads and lasses was by one of their chaperons, math teacher Aaron Grumet, who, according to the *LA Times*, had "lost relatives in the Holocaust":

"Most of my students have seen people shot, so they laughed when the shooting didn't look realistic. They're not Afro-American kids laughing at Jewish horror, they're the inner-city, hip-hop generation, desensitized to violence because they see it everyday."

So what does Spielberg expect, if he won't make shooting scenes sufficiently realistic?

Shalon Paige, aged 14, one of the black students in question, set forth the student point of view;

"When the Jewish girl got shot in the head, she moved weird so some kids laughed. They didn't have to kick nobody out. Maybe they're so upset at us, prejudiced because they're white." Ms. Paige went on to explain the student disaffection: "They didn't want to see a three-hour movie in black-and-white. We don't know about the war. It was long ago and far away and about people we never met." So much for History! Other students

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explained that the only reason they went on the field trip was because it included ice skating afterward, and many of them took the opportunity to duck out of *Schindler's List* and sneak into the adjoining *Pelican Brief* and *Grumpy Old Men*. Smart kids, even though budding historians they ain't!

As for *Philadelphia*, what do you need to know about it except that its hero, Tom Hanks, is an AIDS Victim?

This brings me to *The Piano*, a movie which I fell into in a weak moment. *The Piano* is far and away the Worst Movie I have seen in many years, perhaps since what may well be the Worst Movie of All Time, the absurdist-nihilist Fellini monstrosity, *Juliet of the Spirits* (1965). [Note: to qualify as a Worst Movie, it has to reek of pretension and deliberate boredom: therefore, Grade Z movies such as the latest teenage monster movie don't even begin to qualify.] *The Piano* has no redeeming feature: it is excruciatingly slow and boring; it seems to have been filmed in muddy brown, so that it could just as well have been in black-and-white; it is irrational and absurdist, with characters either having no discernible motivation or changing their motivations on a dime. And Holly Hunter, putative Best Actress of the Year, who has always been an irritating non-actress, reaches a nadir here, her ugly lantern-jawed face made even uglier by being framed by a black bonnet, and her face fixed in an unvarying expression of grim hostility. She is also accompanied by a daughter, conceived without benefit of husband, of about twelve, who is equally ugly and also framed by a black bonnet, and who is also unusually irritating for a kid actor. (Kid actress might even cap the horror by winning the Best Supporting Actress award.)

Hunter is supposed to have come from Scotland to New Zealand as a mail-order bride to what might be called a "planter," except he and his tiny community seem to spend all their time wandering through the jungle. Hunter and many of the other emigres are saddled with a phony Scottish burr so thick that it is difficult to make out much of the dialogue. (Considering the nature of the dialogue, however, that's probably a blessing.)

Crucial to the "plot" is the fact that Hunter is mute. Why is she mute? As she points out in her voice over narration, she stopped talking at the age of six with no idea why. So much for the comprehensibility of these besotted characters. The film critics, who, naturally, have all gone bananas over *The Piano*, gush about the fact that Hunter "expresses herself through her music," her music being the piano in question. Unfortunately, we hear a lot of her piano playing in the movie. Hunter, of course, played the piano herself [there was no dubbing in of Van Cliburn or his moral equivalent], and it shows. Let's face it, Holly Hunter is a lousy pianist, and without benefit of this excruciating movie, she would not have the opportunity of foisting her lack of musicianship upon the long-suffering public. But this is by no means all: the time is supposed to be around the 1840s. OK, there was a lot of great piano music current in that era. So is she playing Chopin, or Schumann, and at least giving us a glorious soundtrack? Not on your tintype. What she plays is newly composed New Age noodling, sans rhythm, melody, or structure. So much for the authenticity of this film.

And now we come to the toperoo of this movie. The directress of the film is the New Zealander Jane Campion, and one of the reasons this movie has been getting a fantastic press is because: "At last! Now the movies are displaying *feminist eroticism*." And on and on, about how erotic and "sexy" *The Piano* is supposed to be.

Puh-leeze! Emetic, not erotic, is the proper term. About the only character in the movie who both acts well and whose motives are comprehensible is Sam Neill, the unfortunate husband, who is so Insensitive and Male Oppressive that he actually is interested in sleeping with his bride. Naturally, La Hunter is as surly as possible, and instead falls into a relationship with thuggish, beerbelly Harvey Keitel ["How wonderful it is to see a naked male body that is not ideal!"]. Keitel, even though another jungle-walking "planter," has Gone Native, hangs around with dancing, happy Maoris, and has gotten *his* ugly puss covered with some kind of

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Aborigine Tattoo or Paint or who knows what. Keitel manages to win Hunter's favors in an elaborate kind of S-M game, where he will sell her back the Piano, which he, and not the husband, had paid the Maoris to cart through the woods to his hut, one "black key" at a time, in exchange for various degrees of seduction. Neill is also Insensitive enough to become enraged when he finds that his bride was fooling around with Keitel rather than himself.

In the end, the two "lovers" go off in a Maori canoe, carting the grotesque Grand Piano with them. For some unexplained reason, Hunter, who had spent the entire movie moping about her beloved piano, suddenly decides to tell the Abos to toss the piano overboard. Her foot gets caught in the rope, drowning along with her damned piano. Unfortunately, however, even that small moment of delight was denied me, and she is rescued.

The famous erotic scene of the two principals naked is enough to get almost anyone to swear off pornography. Holly Hunter, in addition to her pointy jaw, has shoulders like a linebacker, and she behaves just as grimly in the allegedly joyful sex scene as he she does in the rest of the picture.

One of the many puzzling aspects of *The Piano*, indeed, is why two grown men spend so much of their time lusting after La Hunter. At first it seems that she is the only female in the region, except that's not true either, since there is a pointless skit put on at a church by some British settlers. But even if she was the only female, and even if Neill and Keitel's sensibilities had been dulled by years in the jungle, their enthusiasm for Hunter remains one of the unexplained, irrational motivations in *The Piano*.

As I said, *The Piano* has no redeeming feature whatever. Except for poor Sam Neill, who deserves far better things [Neill was Reilly in that grand British TV miniseries, "Reilly, Ace of Spies"], everyone connected with this picture: La Campion, the actors, the costumer, the cinematographer, the whole kit and kaboodle, should have been drowned along with The Piano. ■

M.N.R.

Everyone connected with this movie should have been drowned along with The Piano.

The *Real* State of the Union

by Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr.

Forget the rubbish from the Democrats about the grand (or from the Republicans about the pretty-good) state of the union. America is in crisis, and the cause is an explosion in the size and scope of central government power. Every day, our markets are less free, our property less secure, our laws more arbitrary, our officials more corrupt, and our liberty more diluted.

The leaders of both parties have settled on a mandatory, universal medical plan, i.e. socialism. No one pays any attention to the sorry record of federal medicine among veterans and Indians, or to the fiscal mess of Medicare and Medicaid, which caused our present problems.

Another mandatory, universal plan is Social Security. That too is in crisis, as demographic trends slowly turn it belly up. No young person believes he will see any benefits, despite the FICA marching through his paycheck, and independent scholars agree. Yet there are no serious efforts toward reform.

The family, whose liberty is essential to the decent society, is being nationalized. The administration wants children to start school earlier, so as to get them out of the home; it wants more federally funded baby sitting services, for the same purpose, as well as more therapeutic after-school programs, where kids are taught to hate what the old America stood for.

The national service program passed by Clinton early this year started small, but he wants to balloon it into a full-scale European model. In these

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systems, young people waste two prime years working for the government, when they could be in school or in business serving consumers. Meanwhile, their indoctrination in the glories of Washington, D.C., continues.

Old standards of merit are being replaced with affirmative action and quotas. This is true in the academy, and in what we hope is the for-profit world. American businessmen suffer from victim-group lawsuits or the expensive threat of them. The dominant assumption is that if you are a straight white male, you are The Oppressor, and deserve to be crushed.

Even after the S&L fiasco, driven by government deposit insurance, there is no effort to put banking on a sounder footing. Instead, the industry is slipping rapidly into the mire of victimology. For example, a bank can no longer conduct mortgage policy based on merit. It must first consider race.

We have nearly lost the traditional American principle that liberty is the best organizing force for society. It's no longer easy to start a business, thanks to crushing regulations, taxes, mandates, and controls. Instead of obeying customers, entrepreneurs have to salute politicians and social workers.

Draconian disabilities law, for example, produces no wealth, only privilege. As a result, everyone clamors to be "disabled," which the government defines as *any* physical or mental limitation.

The new head of OSHA promises a reign of terror against businesses. The FDA wants to control the wording of every food label and drive out alternative health remedies. HUD wants to wreck communities now insulated from crime and welfare. And HHS is condom central, with near-pornographic ads beamed into our homes during the children's hour.

The Environmental Protection Agency is conducting a national biological survey designed to give it new powers to shut down development in the name of "endangered species," which now include—no kidding—a fly. Vincent Price, where are you now?

In the age of e-mail, faxes, Fed-Ex, and UPS, we can't even consider repealing the private-express statutes which outlaw competition in first-class mail. Meanwhile, the post office uses its monopoly to squeeze more money out of business.

Personal liberty is in freefall. In the name of crime control, private gun ownership is under attack as never before. The administration has announced its intention to drive most gun dealers out of business and to license federally every handgun owner.

A wire story the other day named John Kenneth Galbraith as the nation's most influential economist. The media have beatified John Maynard Keynes just as volume two of his biography appears. And a *New York Times* headline praised "Socialism's Noble Aims."

There's much to inspire pessimism, but at the top of the list put the FBI, the U.S. Marshalls, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. Their abuse of power resulted in 86 dead religious dissenters in Waco, Texas; Randy Weaver losing a wife and son in Idaho; and the public humiliation of Vidor, Texas, so it could be brought under the federal thumb.

Want some more bad news? There's higher taxes, the exploding debt, Washington's phony budgeting, rap music, the criminal rate, foreign aid, domestic aid, and the lying liberal media.

Clinton cries peace, peace, but there is no peace. We are, in fact, on the verge of another domestic war. Two of our most important public intellectuals—Samuel Francis and Walter Williams—suggest we reconsider secession. That is a fitting reflection of the state of the union. ■

Pull the Plug

by L.H.R., Jr.

Vice President Albert Gore conjures up what are supposed to be scary images of a split between "information haves" and "information have-nots." But if the information includes television, the have-nots will be the richer, and the wiser.

The Veep entices us, he thinks, with visions of 500 channels of interactive tv snaking into our homes. But those who think the present number is too many now have a champion: Pope John Paul II.

Speaking on January 24, the Pontiff called television a major

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threat to family life, especially when used as an "electronic babysitter." Parents, he said, must not hesitate to "turn the set off," since it imports "pornography" and "brutal violence" into our homes.

The medium spreads "degrading values," said the Pope, and on the rare occasion when it isn't morally objectionable, it isolates children and parents in their "own private worlds." He didn't condemn all tv, but he urged restraint because there are "better things to do," often "consideration for other family members requires it," and "indiscriminate television viewing can be harmful."

John Paul II also urged parents to tell the television industry what they think of its products, and to demand reform. Television has "serious," if largely unrecognized, "moral responsibilities" to families, he said. The fact that it can easily sell something that appeals to our lower natures doesn't mean it should, or that we should buy it.

But until the happy day when the typical tv executive doesn't make Michael Jackson and Madonna look good, we should take direct action. I did, when more than three years ago, I created a television-free homeplace.

The catalyst was an article in Pat Buchanan's newsletter, *From the Right*. I had long been apprehensive about the tentacles of Hollywood and Manhattan reaching into my home (my daughter was then 10 years old), but when I took the article's advice and watched long segments of MTV, VH-1, and Black Entertainment Television, I pulled the plug.

Not only is the "music"—from rape-promoting rap to Devil-worshipping head-banging—something that no child, or adult, should be absorbing—but the political content is also vile. Children are urged to adopt pagan, anti-capitalist environmentalism, and to disobey their parents if they teach chastity. The channels don't put it quite that way, of course. They just coax the kids to use condoms no matter what mom and dad say.

The only things I miss, or, rather, dodge, are the clods of smut and socialism (if I don't repeat myself) sent our way.

In the intervening years, not only has my daughter been protected from airwave rot, but I have too. Many's the evening I watched an hour or two of tv, and then wondered why I had wasted my time, and subjected myself to the most intrusive part of the lying media. At least with the *New York Times*, I can turn the page, or put it to its best and highest use—as Spiro T. Agnew once suggested—and line a birdcage with it.

Liberal newspapers and even National Public Radio aren't as bad for the blood pressure as television. It may, in general, induce passivity before its message, but for me, just the sight of the serioso pomposo Ted Koppel, or any other representative of Approved State Wisdom, makes me fume.

Didn't my daughter protest? Sure, but what's a father's authority for, if not to protect his child? It helped, by the way, that I didn't toss out the actual tv set, but kept it hooked up to a vcr, so that we could rent good movies (largely old ones, need I mention) on weekends.

Don't I miss anything on tv? Well, there's the World Series, but that's what sports bars are for. And I admit to being a recidivist during the Los Angeles riots, especially when the early coverage got through the establishment's filters. *That* was educational tv. And I miss seeing Pat on *Crossfire*, and so make an exception for the hotel tv when I'm on the road. But overall, the only things I really miss, or, rather, dodge, are the clods of smut and socialism (if I don't repeat myself) sent our way by what Dan Quayle correctly called the media elites. Another bonus: I didn't see the State of the Union.

Have Donna Shalala and Joycelyn Elders—who might be performers in a Fox sitcom themselves—been broadcasting pro-condom propaganda in prime time, ads that ought

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to be rated NC-17? Funny, I haven't noticed.

The Pope says parents should demand a legally enforceable code of broadcaster conduct, but I have a better idea: put a metaphorical foot through the screen, and spend your time in worthwhile pursuits, like reading, and reading to your children. ■

The Gun Boom

by L.H.R., Jr.

The "Clinton economic recovery" hasn't touched most Americans, but at least gun sales are booming. Bill Clinton's plans and rhetoric, combined with the increased threat of violent crime, is leading Americans to arm themselves before it's too late.

It's a classic case of the Law of Unintended Consequences. The administration wants to discourage gun ownership, which it tries to blame for growing violence. So the President lobbied for and passed the five-day waiting period. He's pumping federal gun licensing. He wants to drive small gun dealers out of business by upping their license fee to $600. And he's assaulting so-called assault weapons. There has even been talk of outlawing handguns and semi-automatic rifles.

As a result, sales are up. Consider this dispatch from Dean Barber of the *Birmingham News*: "In the gun trade, of which Birmingham is a national center, there is an incredible run on guns and ammunition." "Panic buying" is now the norm "because of the perception that you will not be able to buy the gun of your choice in the not-so-distant future."

Wholesale prices for guns have doubled in the past two months. Sales volume in many outlets has tripled. Barber reports that a friend of his got a cash advance from his employer to buy a semi-automatic rifle, six 30-round clips, and 1,200 rounds of ammunition. A criminal? No, he's just "spooked that the government would consider denying him—Mr. Solid Citizen—the right to buy the gun."

Neither Clinton nor Janet Reno nor their allies in the anti-gun movement likes the idea of Americans arming themselves to the teeth against the possibility of a gun ban. So they will step up the political attack on guns, which will only increase the level of gun buying.

Increased gun ownership also bothers burglars, rapists, murderers, and other assorted animals.

More than these people are worried by increased gun ownership, however. It also bothers burglars, rapists, murderers, and other assorted animals (if the cats and dogs will excuse the expression). Criminals are much less safe in a world where the honest are armed, so the mass purchase of guns will make our country safer.

Governments are never successful in banning what people want to buy, for markets function with or without political approval. As we know from alcohol and drug prohibition, some people will take enormous risks to provide the goods that others want. All the government can do by outlawing a product is to make sure it's sold by violent gangs instead of peaceful business owners.

The drug war has been a fiasco, and the obstacles against gun restrictions are even higher. Drugs are socially deviant and there is no right to consume them mentioned in the U.S. Constitution. But the right to keep and bear arms is guaranteed in the Bill of Rights, the closest thing this country has to a sacred public text.

As the Founders knew, the right of gun ownership is essential to American liberty. Guns are not only necessary for deterring criminals and hunting game (or the reverse). Private gun ownership is tangible evidence that we live in a free country.

The government is supposed to have the consent of the governed, and therefore not fear an armed public. Dictators can never take that risk,

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of course, and so always make gun confiscation one of their first priorities. But the administration understands this about as much as it understands the free market, which is to say, not at all.

Unlike George Bush, Clinton doesn't need to search for a vision for his presidency. The public sees it all too clearly: grow the government and shrink our liberty. In guns, health care, taxes, and business regulation, the administration never misses a chance to boost the tax eaters and bash the tax payers.

Last May, reports Nicholas Lemann in the *New York Times Magazine*, an Administration delegation headed by HUD secretary Henry Cisneros and National Economic Council head Robert E. Rubin went to Capitol Hill to push a new program. That's a "Fabian idea," said Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY) in opposition. But Clinton's men interpreted the remark "as praise."

I don't remember the President campaigning for Fabian socialism in 1992, but the public seems to have gotten the message. Thank goodness—for the bull market in guns is the best evidence that Americans still value their liberty. ■

N.B.: The "Fabian idea" was Empowerment Zones, a variant of Jack Kemp's Enterprise Zones, which make inner-city areas eligible for more welfare. This neocon idea is indeed Fabian: disguised, gradual socialism.

P.C. Watch

by L.H.R., Jr.

Reds

The Chinese Communist government issues advice to people traveling abroad on business. Among its injunctions: Resist "decadence. Don't venture into lowly, pornographic areas. Don't read pornographic magazines or watch pornographic videos, and don't bring such things back home." (*Harper's*, 2/94)

Don't Jump

A pamphlet from George Mason University warns students "not to think that a homosexual student might come on to them," reports the *Washington Times* (12/27/93). Young people are also told "not to stare, not to jump when a homosexual touches them, and not to believe that homosexuals are corrupting society."

Dialects

Although educators have been debating the subject for decades, they still don't know how best to teach standard English to speakers of black dialect, which is "becoming more widespread in poor, urban neighborhoods." Educators once predicted that the dialect would fade, but "the current generation of inner-city youth rely more heavily on black vernacular than ever."

One problem is "an element of resistance, and even a stigma, to using standard English, or 'talking proper.'" "English is not our language," says Takiyah Hudson, a high-school senior in Harlem.

"When we were in the '60s," we were "trying to get recognition for the language," says black English proponent Geneva Smitherman of Michigan State, whose book on the subject is to be published in June. "Now we are at the point where we need a multilingual policy that means that everybody would learn one other language or dialect." That is, white and Asian students would learn black English in return for black students learning standard English.

This is wrong, some teachers argue. The dialect is simply "bad English." [Other observers see the toleration of the dialect, and promotion of it by such people as Professor Smitherman, as part of the multicultural attack on Western civilization.] But everyone agrees that "speakers of the dialect are more often rejected by would-be employers than speakers of standard English." Does this mean, by the way, that discrimination against the speakers of black English will be outlawed?

In a sidebar to this story, the *New York Times* (1/5/94) defines some of the features of black English as: lacking the verb "to be" as in "He a brother"; dropping "ed" as indicating the past tense, as in "They have work hard"; using an undifferentiated third-person plural, as in "They love they family"; using "be" as a present-tense verb, as in "She be tired"; lacking subject-verb agreement, as in "He like ice cream"; and dropping

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the possessive "s," as in "Debby mother live over there."

Hooray for Hollywood

Capitol Records issued a press release last fall for a new album, *Gangsta Lean*, by the group DRS—Dirty Rotten Scoundrels. The recording, said Capitol, is "a slice of the average day in the hood and insight into the mind of the endangered young black male. You can't be soft in the world DRS talks about. That explains the song 'Mama Don't Raise No Punks.' This song is about a nigga who 'doesn't care about dying' for what he believes in, whether it be his right-hand man, his mama, or taking out some other nigga for messin' with his woman. It's a humorous take on the gold-digging hoochie who, even though she is out spending her man's ends ($$$), is also out watchin' his back. 'Hell Yeah' she's down for her nigga, down to be his partner and hold his glock (gun) or yayo (dope). Down to give it up when he grabs the back of her head and says 'Make It Rough' for me tonight. Not only do the DRS men play ball hard and talk hard, they also knock the boots [have sex] with the same ruff neck attitude.

"That attitude is also conveyed in 'Strip,' a song about what is called 'Sexual Aggravated Assault' for the white-collar individual, but for the black man is always called rape. It's about a girl who decides in the middle of the act or after sex that she either doesn't want to give up the poom-poom anymore or that she never did want to give it up, making it rape. DRS states that the song is not about those who were legitimately raped but about those who lied. There are a lot of innocent men locked up because some girls, for whatever reason, change their minds.

"This hard-core debut is like a CNN, or rather an 'RNN' (Real Nigga News), for the world. If you walk away from this 'broadcast' without having gained some insight into what it's really like in the hood, then you missed the whole muthafuckin' point.

Quotes That Need No Comment

Underlying the rights of individuals and the rights of peoples is a dimension of universal sovereignty that resides in all humanity and provides all peoples with legitimate involvement in issues affecting the world as a whole.—Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *National Times*

The UN is in Somalia because CNN and other television outlets assaulted the world's conscience with it. The UN is not in Sudan because the government there, weak though it may be, has been able to prevent widespread TV coverage of a famine as bad as that in Somalia.

"It's easier to do humanitarian intervention because of TV," UN Under-Secretary James Jonah said."...Our operations now are CNN-driven."—R.C. Longworth, *National Times*

On Salman Rushdie: he is something of a bore who has made a career of his victimization.—William Pfaff, *New York Times Magazine*

Zhirinovshy is a pure fascist. His desire to revive the Russian empire is characteristic of all fascist leaders in the 20th century.—Zhelyu Zhelev, President of Bulgaria

Zhirinovosky, called the "Russian Hitler" by some German media, has made several trips to Germany, where he is idolized by right-wing extremists because he says land forfeited by Germany after World War II should be returned.—*USA Today*

A Russian Foreign Ministry statement chided Zhirinovsky for remarks "violating generally recognized rules of equitette" while abroad.—*USA Today*

She [Dr. Joycelyn Elders] is a unique human being who speaks for millions of Americans who've been left out of the American dream. More than any other health professional I've met, she speaks with the eloquence and sensitivity of a person who has known the struggles of disadvantaged Americans who've grown up in a hostile environment.—Donna E. Shalala, Secretary of Health and Human Services

Mr. Zhirinovsky has been ordered to leave Bulgaria within 24 hours. In a number of public statements he used offensive language and attitudes toward the Bulgarian head of state that are unacceptable and constitutes interference.—The Interior Ministry of Bulgaria

Croatia faces three unresolved problems: the regional differences, the question of how to accommodate the Serbian minority and the identity question of whether the nation should be anti-fascist or anti-Communist.—Milorad Popovac, law professor in Croatia.

You Americans must leave the Balkans and the Middle East.... If you do not...you will find yourself on a court bench facing another Nuremberg.... We Russians will take no joy when your states [of the United States] start to break away...,when California joins Mexico, when a Negro republic is founded in Miami, when the Russians take back Alaska.—Vladimir V. Zhirinovsky, *USA Today*

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And that may be the worst crime of all." (*Harper's*, 2/94)

Two Out of Three

Police in Denver have compiled a list of suspected gang members, and it includes two out of three young black men in the city. "They ought to call it it the blacklist," said the Rev. Oscar Tillman of the NAACP. "This is harassment."

Blacks represent 5% of the city's population, but 60% of gang members. Hispanics, who represent 12% of the population, are a third of gang members, and whites, who make up 80% of Denver's people, represent 7% of the gangs. The list's "racial imbalance" simply reflects the reality of gang membership, said David Metzler, a Denver police spokesman. "We happen to have a problem with black gangs and Hispanic gangs."

But James Joy of the ACLU said the list smacked of "McCarthyism, when people were punished for associations with left-wing groups and figures." (*New York Times*, 12/11/93)

Black Coffee-Table Books

Coffee-table books now "target black readers," reports the *Washington Post* (1/17/94). The latest is *The African Americans*, produced by book impressario David Cohen and black businessman Charles Collins. "It's a beauty," says the *Post*. "Color images of people of color printed in tones specially selected in China to most realistically reflect their many hues. Film and printing techniques in the United States are designed by white people for white people, says David Cohen."

In fact, the book was printed in China because it's cheaper. The notion that white people don't want true color reproduction (don't want various hues of wood shown accurately, for example) is paranoid even by p.c. standards.

Marryin' Marion

In a "rousing, two-hour 'African-American ceremony of unity'" at Temple Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., former mayor Marion Barry took his fourth bride, Cora Masters, a political science professor at University of the District of Columbia (*Washington Times*, 1/9/94).

Barry was convicted of crack possession after an FBI sting involving an old girlfriend ("Bitch set me up, bitch set me up" he muttered as he was led away). The new Mrs. Barry was fired as head of D.C.'s Boxing and Wrestling Commission for corruption. "Don't care what people say," proclaimed her mother.

"As queen of the house I will treat you as king," said the bride in her formal vows, "unless you abuse, misuse, or create violence against me." ■

Rockbard-Rockwell Report
Center for Libertarian Studies
P.O. Box 4091, Burlingame, CA 94011

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Palo Alto, CA 94301

The Rothbard-Rockwell Report is published by the Center for Libertarian Studies, Post Office Box 4091, Burlingame, California 94011. (800) 325-7257. *Editors:* Murray N. Rothbard and Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr. *Contributing Editors:* Sarah Barton, Joe Melton, Justin Raimondo and Joseph Sobran. *Publisher:* Burton S. Blumert. Managing Editors: Sybil Regan. Subscription: $49 for 12 issues. Single issue: $5. Copyright ©1994 by the Center for Libertarian Studies. All Rights reserved. Unauthorized reproduction of this newsletter or its contents by xerography, facsimile, or any other means is illegal.

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